

2008-02

# Library Outages - Guerilla Test Round 1

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*Downloaded from Deep Blue, University of Michigan's institutional repository*

## Project Cover Sheet

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Project             | <p><b>Library Outages</b></p> <p><i>Guerilla Test of Library Outages ( Round 1)</i></p> <p>The Library Outages webpage lists the status of current problems with online resources. There is a link to this page from the University Library gateway.</p>  |
| Committee & Members | <p>Usability Working Group</p> <p>Suzanne Chapman (chair), David Carter, Michael Creech, Shevon Desai, Karen Downing, Anne Karle-Zenith, Molly Kleinman, Shana Kimball, Gurpreet Rana</p> <p>Pratibha Bhaskaran &amp; Krystle Williams (student interns)</p>  |
| Report Info         | <p>Report Author(s): Pratibha Bhaskaran, Krystle Williams</p> <p>Contact Information: <a href="mailto:ul-usability@umich.edu">ul-usability@umich.edu</a></p> <p>Report Date: February 2008</p>  |
| Objectives          | <p>The goal for this test was first, to determine whether the link to the Library Outages page could be easily found on the Library's main page, and second, to determine whether the name 'Library Outages' was an appropriate label for the content it represents.</p>  |
| Methodology         | <p>Method – Informal “Guerilla” User Test</p> <p>Dates of study: January 2008</p>   |
| Results & Analysis  | <p>Although most participants indicated looking for outage type information within the Help section, only 3 specifically indicated the Library Outages link as a valid option. When asked to choose from a list of potential names only one participant thought that Library Outage was an appropriate label. Most wanted a basic yet descriptive title for this page.</p>  |
| Recommendations     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Add a link to the “Library Outages” page from the “Ask Us” page</li><li>• Use terms suggested to fill out the meta tag in the Outages.html so if users use these terms in a search, they will be more likely to find the page.</li><li>• To further increase visibility of the outages link, consider including an icon that helps draw the eye to its location on the Library Gateway page</li><li>• Re-test using alternate terms placed into mockup of webpage to find a replacement title/label for “Library Outages”</li></ul> |

## Introduction

The Library Outages page lists problems with electronic resources, maintenance issues etc; however, it is not clear if this page can be easily found by visitors to the library website. Concern has also been expressed that the name 'Library Outages' might not be clear to the patrons of the library. The goal of this test was to ascertain whether the page could be easily found by users looking for information about a resource that was not working, whether the name conveyed the appropriate meaning to them, and to obtain their ideas for names they thought were suitable.

## Test & Results

Potential participants were approached near the circulation desk of the Shapiro Undergraduate Library, in the lobby of the Hatcher Graduate Library and in the DIAD lab on the fourth floor of Shapiro. Of the 15 people who agreed to participate, 7 were undergraduate students at U-M, 6 were graduate students and 2 had no affiliation to the University.

### *Task 1:*

The participants were shown a color printout of the U-M library gateway website (see Appendix A), and asked where they would click to find information if an electronic resource like Mirlyn was not working. The goal for this task was to determine the findability of the link to the “Library Outages” page (and whether the name conveyed the appropriate meaning) from the homepage.

*(Participants were permitted to give more than one response if they thought they'd try more than on link)*

- Help link: 7/15 (there is a link to outages on the Help page)
- Ask Us link: 7/15 (there isn't currently a link on the Ask Us page)
- Library Outages Link: 3/15

### *Task 2:*

The participants were then shown a printout of the Library Guides page, a 2<sup>nd</sup> level page (see Appendix B), and asked where they would go to find the same information. This was to determine if the position of the Library Outages link within the global navigation (currently under Help) was where the participants expected it to be. *Note – since test was done using a paper version of the website, participants did not have the chance to explore what each global navigation link included.*

- Help from navigation bar: 9/15
- Ask Us: 7/15
- How Do I?: 1/15
- Questions & Comments: 2/15
- Resources: 1/15
- Would search: 1/15

### *Task 3 & 4:*

Participants were then shown a printout of the Library Outages page with the title removed (see Appendix C). The purpose of the page was explained to them and they were asked to suggest titles. Following this, a list of suggested titles was read out to them, and they were asked to comment on which ones they felt were

appropriate and which were uninformative and given the opportunity to offer their own suggestion.

Of the options provided, participants chose the following:

- Library Outages: 1
- Outages: 0
- Maintenance: 2
- Library Maintenance: 3
- Bugs: 0
- Known Issues: 5
- System Status: 5

#### *Task 5:*

Finally, participants were asked if they would use the search feature to look for information about why a resource was unavailable. If they said they would perform a search, they were asked at which stage of the process they would do so, i.e. from the outset, or after browsing a few links for the same information. They were also asked what keywords they might use. *See Appendix D for the test script, and Appendix E for the complete test results.*

- Would not search: 5
- Yes, would search: 9
  - Terms participants might use: trouble, bugs, status, help, known issues, journal maintenance, problems with Mirlyn

## **Analysis**

### **Location of Library Outages Link:**

Overall, the placement of Library Outage within the Help section seems to be appropriate. When viewing the main page, all participants indicated that they would look for outage information within the Help section (some indicated Help in general and others indicated "Ask Us" which is located within Help). However only 3 of the 15 participants specifically indicated Library Outages as the appropriate place to find information about online resources functioning improperly. When viewing the Library Guides webpage, 9 of the 15 participants indicated this information would be found under Help in navigation bar. See figure 1 for the distribution of the participants' responses.

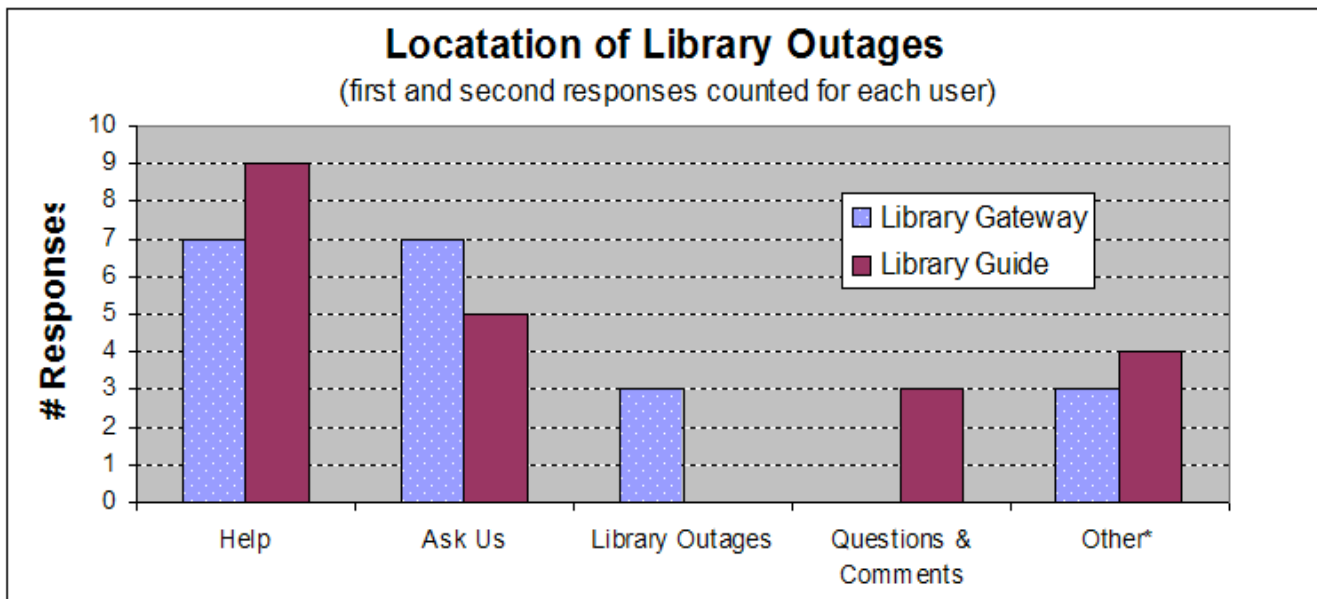


Figure 1: Location of Library Outages

**Labeling of Library Outages:**

Overwhelmingly Library Outages was considered far too technical and uninformative. Our first participant indicated that he scanned the Help section and still did not consider the Library Outages link a valid option. Many participants commented that the label should be in layman's terms and should explicitly relate to content on the Outages pages such as "Journal Maintenance." Although this type of labeling might be too specific given the current scope of the Outages site, we believe a more descriptive non-technical name would provide greater findability. Suggestions include: "Why is My Resource Unavailable?", "Resources Currently Unavailable" or "Current Status of Online Resources". *See Appendix F for a complete listing of suggested names.*

To further increase visibility of the outages link, consider including an icon that helps draw the eye to its location on the Library Gateway page. Possibly a red or gold exclamation point - this usually indicates an alert. Optional because current tests show participants correctly assumed outage information should appear in the Help section but the current labeling (Library Outage) did not resonate with them. Arguably, simply changing the Library Outages label as mentioned will aid findability. Further testing will help reveal this.

## Appendix A: University Library Gateway Homepage

(Library Outages link located under the Help section in the bottom left corner)

**UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN**

**Library**

**General Search**

- ☒ Mirlyn: Library Catalog
- ☐ Find Databases
- ☐ Find e-Journals
- ☐ Library Web Pages

Enter keywords

Examples: "occult fiction"  
wom?n

**Find Articles**

General Interest

Enter keywords

Examples: polymers  
neoclassicism

**Already Have a Citation?**

**Help**

- [Ask Us \(Ask a Librarian\)](#)
- [Guides and Tutorials](#)
- [Off Campus Access](#)
- [How do I...](#)
- [Searchpath](#)
- [Library Outages](#)

**Resources**

- Mirlyn: Library Catalog
- Search Tools: Articles & Databases
- e-Journals and Newspapers
- Research Guides
- Managing Citations & Bibliographies
- [More...](#)

**Library Services**

- Borrowing and Circulation
- Delivery Services
- Interlibrary Loan (ILL)
- Course Reserves
- Subject Specialists
- Workshops and Tutorials
- MLibrary Labs
- [More...](#)

**About the Library**

- Libraries
- Hours
- Collections
- Staff Directory
- Giving to the Library
- [More...](#)

**Information for**

- Undergraduate Students
- Graduate Students
- Faculty and Staff
- Patrons with Disabilities
- U-M Alumni
- Retired Faculty and Staff
- Library Colleagues
- Visitors

**I need to find:**

|                     |                                |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Books               | Reference sources / Fast Facts |
| Articles            | Subject specialist librarians  |
| Databases & indexes | New items at the library       |
| Course reserves     | Libraries at U-M               |
|                     | <a href="#">More...</a>        |

**-Campus Quick Links-**

[My Library Account](#)

**Library News**

**JANUARY 29, 2008**

- Take Our "Ask Us" Survey!
- Nominate for The Best of Technology Writing 2008
- Jane Blumenthal Elected to MLA Board of Directors
- Recent Web Site Changes
- OAI Harvesting of MBooks Now Available
- Coming Soon: Bert's Cafe
- [More news...](#)

**EVENTS AND EXHIBITS**

**you are invited...**

- A Conversation with Steven Levy
- From Papyri to King James: The Evolution of the English Bible
- [Other events...](#)

University Library, [University of Michigan](#)

[Comments?](#)

Last Update: 11:01 AM EST on Monday, January 28, 2008

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## Appendix B: Library Guides Webpage

(Library Outages link located within the Help drop-down menu of the navigation bar)

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



Search  for

About MLibrary

MLibraries

MLibrary Services

Information for

Resources

Help

 Ask Us

### Library Guides and Tutorials

[Search](#) | [Browse by Subject](#) | [Browse by Title](#) | [Browse by Library Department](#) | [Questions? Comments?](#)

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If you are a library staff member, and you would like to have a guide included, please contact [libinstruct@umich.edu](mailto:libinstruct@umich.edu).

Search for:

University Library, [University of Michigan](#)  
[Comments?](#)

 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Last Update: 08:34 AM EDT on Friday, September 07, 2007

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## Appendix C: Library Outages Webpage (with title removed)

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN **MLibrary** Search  Mirlyn: Library Catalog for  Enter keywords

[About MLibrary](#) [MLibraries](#) [MLibrary Services](#) [Information for](#) [Resources](#) [Help](#) [Ask Us](#)

This is a communication tool to alert University Library users to outages, regularly scheduled maintenance, and serious problems with electronic resources (MIRLYN, Lexis-Nexis, MOA, etc.)

If you are experiencing a problem not reported here, or to enquire about the status of a current outage, contact: [Ask Us](#)

**Current Outages** | [View Closed Outages](#)

Sort by: [Outage Date](#) [Title](#)

**Title:** **IEEE Xplore Digital Library**  
**Outage Date:** 02/02/2008 -- 09:00:00 (EDT)  
**Description:** IEEE Xplore Digital Library is scheduled for Saturday, 2 February. During this deployment, the system will be unavailable for up to eight hours beginning at approximately 9:00 AM EST. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

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**Title:** **EBSCOHOST access via Flint**  
**Outage Date:** 01/29/2008 -- 12:32:41 (EDT)  
**Description:** Flint users are having problems connecting to EBSCO e-journals because of IP address registration.  
**Update:** 01/29/2008 -- 12:33:36 (EDT): Investigating U-M IP addresses registered with EBSCOHOST.

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**Title:** **JN Journal of Nephrology [1121-8428]**  
**Outage Date:** 01/28/2008 -- 17:14:11 (EDT)  
**Description:** The MGetIt Linker indicates electronic access from 1996 via Free E-journals, but the website states that full-text access is only available to subscribers. In addition, there is no Mirlyn record for this particular title, although there is an Internet Journal of Nephrology that should not be confused with this title.  
**Update:** 01/28/2008 -- 17:28:23 (EDT): The Linker was in error as there is no U-M subscription to this ejournal. Databases are being updated.

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**Title:** **Cell Cycle**  
**Outage Date:** 01/28/2008 -- 15:32:38 (EDT)  
**Description:** Some patrons cannot access the most recent issues.  
**Update:** 01/28/2008 -- 15:33:33 (EDT): The most recent issues are accessible from the Hatcher Graduate Library. EAU-Support is contacting the vendor with our IP addresses.

*Note: The screenshot of the library outages page above was taken on 01/29/08, though the user tests were conducted on 01/26/08. The outages listed above have been updated since the day the screenshot was shown to the test participants.*



## Appendix D: Test Script

### Greeting the Participant

Hi, My name is xxx and I am a student working with the Library's Usability (Working) Group. We are conducting a brief study of a library website and would like some feedback from students. Would you be willing to participate? This will only take five minutes.

### Pre-test Briefing

Thanks for agreeing to participate.

Before we start, I'd like to mention a couple of things.

First, we are only looking for your opinion; we're not testing you in any way and you will remain completely anonymous. We are, however, evaluating certain features on the Library's website. During the test, feel free to comment on anything, such as the layout, the colors, the labels, vocabulary, etc. regarding the website. If you would like to stop this session anytime, please let me know.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

To start, I'd like to know your affiliation with U-M - are you an undergraduate student, a grad student, staff or faculty?

How often do you visit and use the library's website? (daily, weekly, or another less frequent time period)

### Test

During the next few minutes, I will be asking you questions based on a specific scenario and then ask you to respond to various screen shots of the Library's website.

#### Task 1

*Show the participant a color printout of the University Library gateway website (<http://www.lib.umich.edu>).*

So let's assume you are trying to access an online library resource such as Mirlyn and you find that it isn't working. Say you want to find out why it isn't working and when it will be fixed. This is the library's homepage. Where on the page would you go to find that information?

#### Task 2

*Show the participant a color printout of the University Library Guides webpage (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/guides/>).*

This is another page on the library's website. Where on this page would you go to find the same information?

**Task 3**

*Show the participant a color printout of the Library Outages webpage (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/outages>), but block out the title 'Library Outages'.*

This is a library website that lists all the problems with journals or databases. So if something isn't working, it's reported on this page, along with information about why it isn't working and what's being done about it. What do you think this page should be called?

(Participant replies)

**Task 4**

Okay, now I am going to read out a list of suggested titles and I'd like you to tell me which ones you think fit best.

- Library Outages
- Outages
- Maintenance
- Library Maintenance
- Bugs
- Known issues
- Systems Status

Can you think of any other titles that might be suitable? Are any of the titles particularly uninformative?

**Task 5**

Final question.

Would you use the search feature to find information about why a certain function of the library website did not work properly?

(yes/no)

At what point would you use the search feature?

(Immediately? / After you clicked around and didn't find what you were looking for? / Never?/ Other?)

What words would you use in the search box?

(end)

Thank you again for taking the time to participate. Your feedback is very valuable!

**Appendix E: Complete Test Results**

| # | Gender | UM Affiliation | Library Website Usage             | Task 1                       | Task 2                         | Task 3  | Task 4                                     | Task 5   | Comments                    |
|---|--------|----------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|--|-----------------------------|
| 1 | M      | None           | Twice a year                      | Help                         | -Help<br>- Information For     | -Potential Problems<br>-Potential Difficulties                          | Known Issues                               | -Yes<br>-Would go through Help first. Search as last resort.                     | Library Outages - bad word! |
| 2 | M      | Grad           | Once/twice a day when in Michigan | Help                         | Questions & Comments           | No answer   | -System Status<br>-Online Resources Status | No   |                             |
| 3 | M      | Undergrad      | Daily                             | -Help<br>-Ask Us             | Ask Us                         | -System Alert<br>-What's Not Working<br>-Why is My Resource Unavailable | -System Status<br>-Known Issues            | No   | Outages: jargon             |
| 4 | F      | Undergrad      | Never                             | Ask Us                       | -Questions & Comments<br>-Help | Frequently Asked Questions  | Library Maintenance                        | -Yes<br>-Look for Help or contact info first.<br>Keyword: "Problems with Mirlyn" | Don't know what outages is  |
| 5 | M      | Undergrad      | few times week                    | -Help<br>-Ask Us             | -Help<br>-Ask Us               | Future Availability   | -Systems Status<br>- Maintenance/Status    | -Yes<br>-As a last resort. ("Its usually not reliable")                          | Bugs doesn't make sense     |
| 6 | F      | Undergrad      | Often                             | -Help<br>-Ask Us<br>How Do I | Help                           | No answer   | Maintenance                                | -Yes<br>-Would search first  | Outages is too technical    |
| 7 | F      | Undergrad      | 1-2 times a week                  | -Help<br>-Ask a Librarian    | Help                           | Problems  | Library Outages                            | -Yes<br>But would go to Help first   |                             |

Library Outages • Guerilla Test of Library Outages (Round 1)

| #  | Gender | UM Affiliation | Library Website Usage | Task 1                        | Task 2                      | Task 3  | Task 4  | Task 5  | Comments   |
|----|--------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| 8  | M      | Undergrad      | once a month          | Ask Us                        | Questions & Comments        | Solutions   | Library Maintenance   | Yes Immediately   | Even when shown the outages page and reading the description the user still needed clarification as to its purpose |
| 9  | F      | Graduate       | 2-3 times a day       | Library Outages               | -Help (first)<br>-Resources | -Outage and Maintenance log<br>-Website Error Log | (User felt all were vague and came up with additional suggestions after seeing the layout)<br>-Library system Error log<br>-Library Maintenance and Error Reporting | No  | User Comment: Title should be obvious and basic  |
| 10 | M      | Grad           | Never                 | Library Outages               | Help                        | -Status<br>-Current outages                       | -Maintenance (but that refers to a physical layout)<br>-Known Issues<br>-Website Status   | -No<br>-Search function is a last resort.   | "Bugs" is confusing  |
| 11 | M      | Grad           | Every other month     | -Ask a Librarian<br>-How Do I | -Keywords<br>-Help          | Current Issues We're Working On                   | -Bugs<br>-Known Issues  | -Yes<br>-Browse first<br>-Would enter the suggested titles (e.g. Known Issues, Journal Maintenance) | Outages: not helpful<br>System Maintenance: not helpful  |
| 12 | M      | Undergrad      | Daily                 | Type in Mirlyn Search         | Search Box                  | No answer   | Library Maintenance   | Yes Straight to search<br>Keyword: Help   | Bugs: uninformative  |

Library Outages • Guerilla Test of Library Outages (Round 1)

| #  | Gender | UM Affiliation | Library Website Usage | Task 1                                      | Task 2           | Task 3                          | Task 4                          | Task 5  | Comments  |
|----|--------|----------------|-----------------------|---|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
| 13 | M      | None           | Monthly               | Help  | -Help<br>-Ask Us | Common Problems                 | -Known Issues<br>-System Status | -Yes<br>-Click around first<br>-Keywords: "trouble", "bugs", "status" | Maintenance: not good<br>Outages: not good  |
| 14 | F      | Grad           | 6 times a week        | Ask us                                      | Ask Us           | Journal Information             | System Status                   | -Yes<br>But go to Ask Us first  | Task 2<br>The user indicated "Ask Us" as her first choice because the question mark icon caught her eye.<br>Task 4<br>Maintenance is particularly uninformative |
| 15 | F      | Grad           | Daily                 | -Library Outages<br>-Recent Website Changes | Ask Us           | Resources Currently Unavailable | System Status                   | No  | Bugs: not good<br>Maintenance: not appropriate  |

## **Appendix F: Suggested Alternatives to Library Outages Label**

### **Names provided to participants:**

- Library Outages
- Outages
- Maintenance
- Library Maintenance
- Bugs
- Known Issues
- System Status

### **Names suggested by participants:**

- What's Not Working
- Why is My Resource Unavailable?
- Resources Currently Unavailable
- Current Issues We're Working On
- Future Availability
- Current Status of Online Resources
- Website Status
- Journal Information
- Online Resources Status
- Website Error Log
- Library System Error Log
- Library Maintenance and Error Reporting
- Potential Problems
- Potential Difficulties
- System Alert
- Common Problems
- Frequently Asked Questions